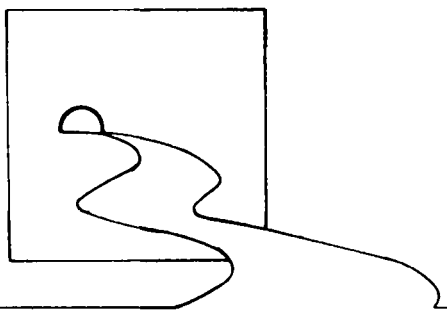

THE CHATTAHOOCHEE REVIEW

DeKalb Community College

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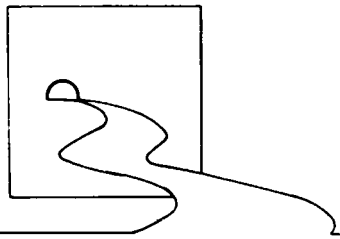

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This initial issue of *The Chattahoochee Review,* in only the second year of operations at North Campus, represents a successful blend of three newly founded activities: a creative writing lecture series, a college-wide week-long symposium, and a literary magazine. The editors of *The Chattahoochee Review* are proud to devote this first issue to the work of Andrew Lytle, Ann Deagon, and Marion Montgomery, and the work they inspired in DeKalb College students and faculty. Volume I Number 2 will be devoted to the work of our Spring guests, John Stone, Larry Rubin, and Anne Rivers Siddons, and to the work of DeKalb College students and faculty.

The Editors

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The Agrarian Tradition

In view of the resurgence of interest in the old South as indicated by the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Agrarian Symposium in Nashville, Tennessee, and by the appearance, at numerous lectures throughout the South, of Andrew Lytle and other proponents of Southern traditions, it is perhaps an appropriate time to re-examine the growth of the Southern Agrarian movement.

In the pre-depression year of 1930, the Southern farmers were suffering economically. The backward farm-based lifestyle which depended on mules and family members as laborers could not compete with the tractors, plows, and newer machines of the industrial age. Thus it was that the South found itself faced with the inevitability of accepting progress.

There were some, however, who spoke out against the tendency to accept the "American industrial ideal."[1] This group had as its nucleus four poets who had enjoyed considerable influence in literary circles. John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Donald Davidson, who were known as the Nashville Fugitives, were joined by John Gould Fletcher, Henry Blue Kline, Lyle Lanier, Andrew Lytle, Stark Young, Herman C. Nixon, Frank Owlsey, and John Donald Wade; all had been in some way associated with Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. The Agrarians, as they were called, believed so strongly in the Southern Tradition that they wanted to make a statement and propose a course of action for the South to follow. Each author chose a topic related to Southern life and tradition. An introduction stated the common convictions of the group. After publication in 1930, *I'll Take My Stand: The South And The Agrarian Tradition* became the manifesto of the Agrarian movement.

Examining the origins of the Southern Tradition will help, perhaps, in understanding why the Agrarians were so involved in its preservation. Ransom, in his essay "Reconstructed But Unregenerate," proposed that the Southern culture was founded on European principles and more specifically, that England's culture was the model.[2] John Donald Wade's essay exemplified the characteristics of English culture in his portrayal of Cousin Lucius. "Dedicated to God and the ladies,"[3] Lucius, after being educated in the classical manner, returned home to become a teacher and a farmer who loved and respected the land which supplied his needs. Since the overproduction of necessities was neither needed nor desired, there was leisure time for the development of the mind. Lucius, being himself interested in

continuing the reading of the classics, started a lending library in the town and organized a debating team as he had done in college.[4] This life of the spirit was one of the important aspects of European culture. Louis Rubin, in his Introduction to the 1962 edition of *I'll Take My Stand,* wrote, ". . . the South . . . retained a manner of living in which grace, leisure, spiritual and aesthetic experience were possible."[5] Simply stated, it was regarded by the Agrarians as the good life.

Defining this good life was one goal of the Agrarian movement. A more important purpose was to warn of the insidious effects of industrialization. The Agrarians insisted that the unchecked acceptance of industrialism would have a dehumanizing effect on man's economic, spiritual and social life. They believed that the large farm combines and factories, controlled by a board of directors demanding more production, would cheapen man's labor, thereby causing a loss of pride in his work.[6] The Agrarian's view was that man, by rushing to amass material possessions, would lose sight of the things that made life worth living.[7] Since industry gave the impression of controlling nature, the Agrarians asserted that neither art nor religion could prosper, because both required a view of nature as being mysterious and unknowable.[8] The social amenities—manners, conversation, hospitality, sympathy, and family life—would suffer because of the increasing demands of an industrial society.

The Agrarians did not limit their warnings to the dangers to man; they were concerned about our natural resources as well. In their view, our vast land areas, our rivers, and forests were also in danger of being depleted in the name of progress.[9]

Despite the dangers of industrialization, the Agrarians knew that the South could not return to the pre-industrial farm society. Ransom, in his essay, wrote, "The South must be industrialized—but to a certain extent only, in moderation."[10] The Agrarians, as advocates of the pastoral life, wanted the South to keep her farm-based economy, where men worked with nature, not against it; where they were self-sufficient; where they would have the leisure to enjoy the life of the mind; where they could be proud of their work and of themselves.

The Agrarians, concerned about the future of the South and believing in her traditions and lifestyle, were prompted to state their condemnation of the acceptance of unrestrained progress. In looking back over the years since *I'll Take My Stand* was published, we can see the evidence of the South's industry all around us. Perhaps some would contend that the South has succumbed to industrialization exactly as the Agrarian movement prophesied. Others would say that the South would

have been unable to survive in the modern age without industry. Whatever the view, it remains clear that the Agrarian Tradition believed in man's dignity, particularly as applied to the South, and was committed to its preservation.

Louise Bailey

NOTES

[1]John Crowe Ransom et al., "Introduction: Statement of Principles," *I'll Take My Stand: The South And The Agrarian Tradition* (1930; rpt. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1979), p. xxxviii.

[2]*I'll Take My Stand*, p. 3.

[3]"The Life And Death Of Cousin Lucius," *I'll Take My Stand*, p. 273.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 276.

[5]*I'll Take My Stand*, p. xxv.

[6]"Reconstructed But Unregenerate," p. 18.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. xxix.

[8]John Crowe Ransom et al., "Introduction," p. xlii.

[9]Louis Rubin, Jr., "Introduction," *I'll Take My Stand*, p. xv, p. xix.

[10]"Reconstructed But Unregenerate," *I'll Take My Stand*, p. 22.

Introduction of Andrew Lytle

I have time to mention only one other essay in *I'll Take My Stand*, and I have saved Andrew Lytle's essay, "The Hind Tit," till last, not because of the circumstances of the present occasion [The Changing South: Rural to Urban, Symposium at DeKalb Community College November 18, 1980] but because (indeed fortunately for the present occasion) I think it is probably the most successful essay in the whole volume in depicting the virtues of an agrarian culture. That may be because he actually knew more about it than the other contributors, though he came from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, a pretty sophisticated small city thirty miles from Nashville, and though I remember him as one of the fastest dancers at the Vanderbilt proms, he was very much of a farm boy too, having spent a good deal of time on his family's farms in Alabama and having run one of them for some years after he left college. "The Hind Tit," the South, was trying unsuccessfully to draw sufficient sustenance from the nation's least productive source. But the hind tit expresses it better, and anyway Lytle has always been fond of the (what shall I say?) of the earthy title.

Characteristically, his beginning is historical (for America lost an important historian when Lytle became an important novelist). The founders of the American Union would be amazed and saddened at the "awful spectacle" of America, of "men run mad by their inventions . . . . of a moral and spiritual suicide, foretelling an actual physical destruction." And he says, "The escape is not in socialism, in communism, or in sovietism—the three final stages industrialism must take." Lytle and Tate and Warren wanted to change the title of *I'll Take My Stand* to something like *Tracts Against Communism.* They were embarrassed by some of the implications of using the old Confederate war song —"In Dixie land I'll take my stand to live and die in Dixie." But they were opposed by Ransom and Davidson, the other most active members of the group, and after publication Tate wrote to Davidson:

> It is over now. Your title triumphs. And I observe that Alexander [Columnist for The Nashville Tennessean] today on the basis of the title defines our aim as an "agrarian revival," and reduces our real aims to nonsense. . . .by not making our appeal through the title to ideas, we are at the mercy of all the Alexanders—for they need only to draw portraits of us plowing or cleaning a spring to make hash of us before we get a hearing. My melancholy is profound.

Most of the so-called intelligentsia of those days were pink, some deep red. When I went up to graduate school at the University of Illinois in 1930, I was invited to a party given by a noted political science professor, and when I got there I discovered it was a Communist cell. I was not enthusiastic and was not invited again. Those boys who took their stand at that time knew what they were doing and they meant business.

On the abstract side, on the side of ideas and concepts, Lytle is as strong as the best of the essayists in the volume. He says, "It is in fact impossible for any culture to be sound without a proper respect for the soil, no matter how many urban dwellers think that their victuals come from groceries and delicatessens and their milk from tin cans." The common answer to the farmer's plight, he says, is to industrialize the farm. There would be no harm in such an experiment if the price were not too great, he says, but "in exchange for the bric-a-brac of the culture of progress, [the farmer] stands to lose his land, and losing that, his independence, [or]. . . mortgage his land and send his daughters to town to clerk in ten-cent stores, that he may buy the products of the Power Age and keep its machines turning."

But it is Lytle's pictures of the rural South that give meaning and intimacy to his main points. The mind lives by pictures more than anything else. Pictures, images, imagination (which we might think of as *image*-ination) impart the breath of life to the activities of our minds. So he gives us in great detail the pictures of country life: how to cut firewood just as the sap begins to go down, how to build a fire and keep it going slowly and steadily, the sound of the rising bells from all the neighboring farms, strings of red peppers hanging to dry on the back porch, Old Harp singers at country play parties, the meaning of rain and how to predict it, how to pull a nursing calf away from its mother so that milking can begin ("he must be held by the ears and tail at the same time, for only in this manner is he easily controlled"), country food ("the only salad to be seen on a country table is sallet, or turnip greens, or if further explanation is necessary, the tops of turnips cut off and cooked with a luscious piece of fat meat. It has the appearance of spinach; but unlike this insipid slime, sallet has character, like the life of the farmer at the head of the table. The most important part of this dish is its juice, the pot licker, a rich green liquid. . . .Mixed with corn bread, it has no equal. Particularly is it fine for teething babies.") But I won't go on. You see what I mean.

It is with great personal pleasure that I present to you the distinguished teacher, editor, historian, essayist, short-story writer, and novelist, Andrew Nelson Lytle.

John Tyree Fain

The Artist in a Time of Disorder

Man has two activities: the making of things and the doing of deeds. (I am assuming that reflection is an action). The making of things is governed by art; the doing of deeds by prudence. You will recognize that I am paraphrasing St. Thomas from very necessity in dealing with the subject. To quote him directly, "Art does not require of the artist that his act be a good act, but that his work be good. . . ." In other words, art does not presuppose rectitude of appetite but only aims to serve it, whether for good or ill. There is a very practical reason for this. Immersed in making the idea into a concrete action, the artist cannot be diverted by any thought or concern of his as a man. He cannot allow himself to think, if he is writing a book, how great the book will make his reputation, or how it will make enough money to pay off the mortgage; if he is a priest preparing a sermon, he cannot think of the parish he wants and may get, if his sermon is good enough. If he does, the book will never get written nor the sermon composed, for the simple reason that he will be confusing two worlds in which the artist moves: his private world of the life with other human beings and the world of the imagination and of his calling. It takes a long time in the morning to put away your carnal nature, or his private world, to build a metaphorical wall around the imagination into which you have entered to be inspired by its pictures and receive there the form by means of which you will make the subject flesh; because an art has fixed ends and fixed means to reaching that end, never the expression of the passing ego. To maintain the illusion of life in a book, say, is a most delicate thing. It has its life, of course; but an urgent demand of life will always intrude. But more forcibly, to quote that wise man Coomaraswamy directly, "It will be obvious that there can be no moral judgment of art itself, since it is not an act but a kind of knowledge or power by which things can be well made, whether for good or evil use. . . ." If the artist has agreed to make an instrument that will blow up the world, he will have failed as an artist if it merely explodes like a Roman candle. But behind the artist is the moral man. This brings up the ethical question: should the instrument be made at all? What a society needs and wants must be agreed upon beforehand. But once these are agreed upon, the artist will fail and miss the mark, if what he makes does not work. He will make nothing if he carries on an endless debate with himself as to whether it will do good or ill. This difference between moral and artistic sin is universal. Confucius speaks of the Succession dance as being "at the same time perfect beauty and perfect goodness," but of the war dance as being "perfect beauty but not perfect goodness."

Andrew Nelson Lytle

A Western Agrarian

Andrew Lytle stood tall, erect, and dignified at the podium, speaking about a way of life, agrarianism, in which he believes deeply, but that he says is gone. He remembered his home place and the Southern agrarian lifestyle nostalgically, reminiscing with anecdotes about his family. He said that he "bought a small farm a while ago, but that there was no community in the country."

There is in the American spirit something which admires a stubborn man who refuses to yield his position, even in the face of an onslaught of popular opinion and actuality. His manner, bearing, and recalcitrance reminded me of another man, a Western agrarian, my grandfather. Recognizing Mr. Lytle's love of biographies based on rural life, I would like to share with him the story of my grandfather, offering the thought that the agrarian ethic hasn't disappeared, but only moved over the horizon.

Born in Sedalia, Missouri, on or about 1885, Grandad, otherwise known as Orville L. Wilkerson, was the oldest and only son, with four younger sisters. Grandad left Sedalia in 1901, and traveled northwest to Basin, Wyoming. He was approximately sixteen years old, and his mode of travel and reason for leaving home are as unknown to his family as was his age at the time of his death in 1973. He never would speak of his youth or his father. He came to Wyoming to build a new life, and went to work as a cowboy for a rancher near Basin, a small county seat in the Big Horn Valley.

Big and tall, 6 feet, 3 inches, he worked twelve years for Mr. Scogard. In 1913, he married Minnie Allen and settled on land he rented from the Lincoln Land Company. The new homestead lay next to the creek, and beside the only access road leading into the Big Horn Mountains through to Sheridan. They built a log cabin and the other outbuildings as needed, to be used as shelter for the cows, horses, pigs, and chickens, or storage for grain, meat, and ice taken from the creek during the hard winters. The creek, canyon, and ranch came to be known as Shell, named for the shells and fossil material found in the area.

Other families came to live nearby and eventually a store was built next to the icehouse to provide small luxuries and necessities the soil and stock couldn't. With their own five children and the children of others to consider, my grandparents and the other ranchers constructed a small school, and soon after, a church.

Hardworking, Grandad rented more land both above and below Shell, which he farmed for wheat, corn, oats, and hay,

and used for grazing land. A frugal and conservative man, he was able to purchase during the Depression the Shell ranch and Horsecreek ranch, that lay above in a mountain base plateau. As times grew harder, he bought several other parcels and resettled the family west and halfway between Shell and Greybull, still maintaining the ranch at Horsecreek. The younger children rode horseback ten miles to the school in Shell.

The family was known for its orchard, abundant supply of chickens, turkeys, fat hogs and sleek Hereford cattle, and equally important, horse teams and cow ponies. A man down and out could usually find work with Grandad, either driving the herds into the mountains, branding new calves, haying the fields, or reaping the grain. In the fall after the cattle drive down the mountain pass was over, the canning, preserving, and butchering had been done, there was a little time for a square dance or a hayride.

But it was a work ethic, dedicated to the land and families it supported, and there was little time for pleasures. Year in, year out, the cycle changed very little. Hunting for elk, deer, rabbits, and pheasants was a pleasant reprieve from chores, while supplementing the larder before the snow began. When snow flies in northern Wyoming, it can get "knee-deep to a tall Indian right quick," and then the cattle and stock must be tended daily.

Grandad became a sort of patriarch over the years in the communities of Shell and Greybull, respected not only for his increased prosperity and business sense, but also for his honest and friendly dealings.

On the ranches, he was tireless and expected others to be the same. His sons and daughters married, and all but one daughter lived nearby or on the two ranches. He had two prized possessions. One was his Morgan stallion, Sailor, who resided in a special pasture next to the house and road where an occasional drunken cowboy would flip his vehicle over the fence, missing the turn and risking my grandfather's wrath for endangering his horse. The other was his yearly new Oldsmobile which he allowed no one else to drive.

I lived with my grandparents for a time, and watched them at their tasks. My grandmother's chores ranged from gardening, churning butter, and making mincemeat with venison in a large washtub, to slaughtering chickens, scalding them, plucking them, singeing away the last feathers, and putting them into the deep freezers in the bunkhouse next to the orchard. Her kitchen was old-fashioned even in 1952. There was a sink with a hand pump fed by cistern water and a bathtub without running water in an

alcove off the kitchen. Other amenities lay in the direction of the outhouse. In the kitchen, she replaced her wood cookstove with a new electric range, but then she worried about singeing the chickens, so she refused to replace the wood burning stove that was the house's only heat source.

After my grandmother's death, gradually the ranch came to be run solely for the cattle and feed grains, and all but one son moved on to other occupations in other areas. Most of the other families that settled near my grandparents are still there, their children and grandchildren working the land, fulfilling the endless cycles.

I share Andrew Lytle's nostalgia for the home place and agrarian way of life as I knew it. But I also remember the toll it took on families as well as the benefits it gave. Grandad's firm Democratic attitude, sense of independence and responsibility, and respect for intelligence shaped his children's and grandchildren's lives in a definite way. Knowing who and what we came from gives an underlying strength to our days, and knowing that the life we left still exists in the West offers an alternative still to be considered.

Katherine DeLoughy

Andrew Lytle's Cup and Saucer

Every woman whose heritage is embellished by true Southern tradition knows the correct way to choose her china pattern. She must first choose the cup and saucer. The cup's primary appearance should render an immediate portrait of beauty and fragility. The matter of thinness and thickness is most important. The rim of the cup must be the thinned out area and with the slightest bit of thickening down the side into the bowl. This, of course, is for a very special reason: the rim must slip between the drinker's lips unobtrusively like a kiss and the bowl of the cup must be deep enough and strong enough to hold a fair amount of coffee, tea, or even a hot toddy for the sniffles. The cup's handle should be sculpted with an opening for even the largest thumb and forefinger, yet slope upwards to a tiny aperture to accommodate a small finger hooded by a long fingernail.

The saucer is that part of the duo that unites with the cup and makes it whole. The saucer must have a groove in its center just wide enought to allow the footed area of the cup to sit firmly and soundly in its rightful place. The purpose of the saucer is simple: it provides a firm foundation to assist the function of the cup, and it provides a shield between the cup with its contents and the external environment in which it functions.

Good china cups and saucers don't break easily because they're treated with love and care. They do, however, crack, chip, and turn brown with age after cracking. Frequently a set of china will after generations be complete except for the cups. The matriarch, as depicted in Andrew Nelson Lytle's fiction, has the same relationship to her family as the china cup to its saucer.

One flesh and blood demitasse in Andrew Lytle's life probably was influential in molding his literary treatment of the matriarch: she was Edna Barker Lytle. Not much is recorded as to the personality of Edna Lytle; however, the fictitious ladies of Mr. Lytle's novels reflect that she was probably loved and deeply cherished. One example of wife-treasuring is cited in the critique, "The Myth of the Matriarch in Andrew Lytle's Fiction," by Nancy Joyner, *(Southern Literary Journal,* 7, Fall 1974), pp. 67-77. She quotes Suds Pilcher, a minor character from *The Velvet Horn,* written by Lytle. He replies to General Sherman's proclamation that "he would bring every Southern woman to the washboard." Suds said that there was one he wouldn't bring to it, and Suds did the washing to save his wife's hands. He couldn't keep it up, but he had nine daughters to help with the washing and hoeing. Lytle describes Sud's adoration of his wife

further and says, "Every night when he comes in from the fields, he picks up those white, those soft, those useless hands he's ruined nine pair to keep" (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1957), p. 221. This fictitious lady is not a matriarch in the stereotyped sense, nor is she a defining image; but one must agree that only a man whose marriage was richly nourished could artfully and tenderly depict this feminine character.

Ms. Joyner infers that Pilcher's wife is not a matriarch; however, she fails to recognize the complexities of the Southern woman. Like the china cup with its immediate rendering of fragility and beauty, and its ability to be strong enough and thick enough to be the bearer of hot and strong drinks, the lady that Lytle is describing, passively accomplishes the impossible through strong manipulation and simply doing nothing. This is an art that has long been mastered by Southern matriarchs.

The most typical of Lytle's matriarchs is Kate McCowan in the short story, "Jericho, Jericho, Jericho," from *A Novel, A Novella, and Four Stories,* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1958), p. 10. Kate's strength is exhibited in the first part of the story as she tells her grandson, "I'm not a respectable woman. No woman can be respectable and run four thousand acres of land." Later she reaffirms her unconquerable attitude by saying to the bush-whackers who came to ransack her land: "You don't spare me because I'm a woman. You'd shoot a woman quicker because she has the name of being frail. Well, I'm not frail, and my Navy Six ain't frail" ("Jericho," p. 15).

Kate McCowan was not frail; but she was fragile in the way that all humans are fragile when facing their mortality. Kate was not capable of exerting her will as she was dying. She realized too late that the woman her grandson expected to marry had no intention of keeping the plantation. Earlier she asserted, "There will always be a Long Gourd, and there must always be a McCowan on it" ("Jericho," p. 9). This was a futile attempt to maintain control. Until the walls of Jericho come tumbling down, Kate fits the pattern of the dominating and domineering matriarch. Her loss of power through death is the climatic irony of the story. This point is clearly described in Ms. Joyner's critique, (Joyner, "Myth of the Matriarch," pp. 69-70). Kate's combination of strength giving way to her fragility is like the sculpting of the cup's handle to accomodate the large and the small fingers.

Most mothers can identify with Kate's inability to control the lives around her—the lives of her family. Even though her experience may tell her that the matriarch knows best, she learns only too late that to control lives is virtually an impossibility.

But this kind of identification is a form of role-taking. Robert Penn Warren in his essay, "Why Do We Read Fiction," says:

> So role-taking of fiction, at the same time that it gratifies our deep need to extend and enrich our own experience, continues this long discipline in human sympathy. And this discipline in sympathy, through the imaginative enactment of role-taking, gratifies another need deep in us, our yearning to enter and feel at ease in the human community (Baton Rouge: Louisana State University Press, 1958, pp. 107-134).

As in the event of Kate's life ending with loss of control over the lives of her survivors, one must agree that most mothers are able to identify with and take hold of that role. Warren further states that, "Role-taking leads us. . .to an awareness of ourselves" and that "Role-taking leads us to an awareness of others" (Warren, p. 110). It is this self-awareness and awareness of others that is best symbolized by the footed part of the cup with its relationship to the saucer. The family of the Southern matriarch is her foundation, her kingdom, even the very extension of herself. Like the saucer, it gives a firm foundation and protects her from the external environment. The lady-powerful is given power by her family.

Just as an old set of china loses its cups, so the industralized South loses its matriarchs. Stresses of city life tend to decentralize the family's power. Big business uproots the family and sends it moving about without consideration. The matriarch as depicted in Andrew Lytle's fiction becomes something to be remembered. On the evening of November 18, 1980, at DeKalb College, North Campus, the writer was privileged to have a conversation with Andrew Nelson Lytle. The writer remarked, "You know, Mr. Lytle, if we were to resurrect the matriarch to her rightful place of honor and power in the family, we'd have no need of the women's movement." Mr. Lytle replied with a personal story which is indicative of his style:

> My Granny Lytle was asked by the Suffragettes to run for a local office in our county. She answered them saying, "No thank you, I'd better leave something for my husband to do." She was not being submissive but extremely confident that her role as true head of the family was more important than any other role she might assume.

The agrarian matriarch in Andrew Lytle's fiction was important. She was not merely keeping her place in the home—she

was the home. Lytle says in the "Foreword" to *A Novel, A Novella and Four Stories:*

> Man's attitude to woman is the foundation of society, under God. In the South, because of the prevailing sense of family, the matriarch became the defining image. The earlier insistence on purity, an ideal not always a fact, was not chivalric romanticism but a matter of family integrity, with the very practical aim of keeping the bloodlines sure and the inheritance meaningful" (p. xviii).

She was like the cup, the holder of life giving forces. The family was like the saucer, supporting her, protecting her, and giving her power to preserve the Agrarian principles. Today, the South is a set of old fine china which has lost the matriarchal cup to the industrial way of life.

Shirley Andrews

Parable

I sew what I can
Because I must—
Dream warm rain
In a thickening dust.

Marion Montgomery

Home from the Lake

I have written forty poems,
Caught with minnows forty fish
To serve with lemon butter steaming
In a bakelite baking dish.

Poems scaled and washed and scalded
Stare with fixed transparent eyes.
Baking dish, baking dish,
Which game is wise?

Marion Montgomery

Spring Freeze

In winter's mockery of art
Brief amber holds our world at heart;
The beauty of a green To BE
Melts black orginality.

Marion Montgomery

Holding On

Leaves, brown and dry littered the grass and the walk that led up the hill. Evelyn wasn't sure William would approve of such a quiet spot for his resting place; he had never in life shown any fondness for peacefulness. She caught her breath for a minute when she reached the graveside, winded from the hill.

Two months now since she had seen him lain here, and she felt no change in her emotions. He was tired and ready for it; the sickness had drained all the fight from William, and the last night when she sat next to his hospital bed he laughed and said he hoped he got a non-stop ticket 'cause he was tired of waiting in line. With that in mind, she had to be glad for his release, but now standing here, it was hard to decide where she fit.

A gust of wind stirred the crisp leaves onto her legs, and she pulled her coat tight. The leaves settled against the cold marble with his name neatly etched into it: William Arthur Barnett. Her name was there, too, with only the date missing: Evelyn Marshall Barnett. But she was not ill as William had been; the doctor insisted that seventy was not so very old for a woman, and she would likely live many more good years. She looked into the horizon at the thought.

"Mother."

She turned to see Celia standing down the walk a way, looking expectantly in her direction. Evelyn moved toward her daughter, noting the look of near-guilt on the woman's face.

"I'm sorry to rush you, Mama, but I can bring you back another day when there's more time. It's just that I have that appointment at the hairdresser, and he's so unpleasant when I'm late."

Why did you never teach me to drive, William, Evelyn wondered as she followed Celia down the walk to her car.

The fire crackled in the fireplace, and Evelyn had only one lamp at the other side of the room lit. She preferred to enjoy the fire for its own beauty and warmth, rather than spoil it with all the artificial heat and light available. She didn't look at the crochet hook in her hand; by now her fingers could work the piece without concious thought.

"Mama, it's time you sold this old place," Margaret said, looking earnestly at her from the sofa. "It has been four months since Papa died, and you can't always depend on hired help to keep it up for you. You can't do like Papa, now that the weather is turning cold. What if you were to slip on the ice getting out to those old chickens of yours? There'd be no one here to know about it, and what would happen then?"

"Why, I suppose I'd go on then to meet my maker," Evelyn said thoughtfully, easing a knot in the yarn. "They say that when you die from freezing, you just go off to sleep, and there is no pain or anything. I wonder if that is true?"

"Mother!" The exasperation was clear on Margaret's face. She was Evelyn's oldest girl, and always the most serious and practical. Evelyn guessed that Margaret believed her to be nearing senility, but her daughter would, of course, never admit it.

"You know, when Harold died it wasn't six months before I sold the house in Lakeside and moved back here with Jimmy," Margaret continued, straightening her skirt.

"As I recall, you always hated that house, and didn't want to move to Lakeside to start with," Evelyn said casually, looking into the fire.

"Oh, Mother, you just won't see reason, will you? I can see I will have to get Ben and Rita over here to talk to you," Margaret concluded with irritation. "Well, I will go now, but please take care." She bent to kiss Evelyn's cheek, just brushing it with her lips, then walked to the door. "I'm locking it behind me, but don't forget to slide the latch," she called, then the door closed.

"Sell my home?" Evelyn questioned aloud with disbelief. It was old, true, and maybe to the casual eye not one of the most beautiful homes to be had. But she had spent all her married days in this place, and raised three children here. "Time was, I only thought you efficient, Margaret, but I am convinced you are also unfeeling." Shaking her head, Evelyn stood and walked to slide the latch as her daughter had commanded. Just as it slid into place, a big black tomcat appeared and meowed up at her.

"Quinn, you going out in this cool night air? You must have a lady friend waiting, I suspect." She opened the door for him, then replaced the latch.

She went about the house, checking it, room by room, as she had for so many years at bedtime. In the kitchen she washed up the few last dishes, drying them to put away, wiping the few crumbs off the sideboard. Shutting off the light, she went up the steep stairs to the bedroom.

Her movements were slower now, and she breathed harder when she reached the top of the stairs. That was another of Margaret's threats, that she might fall going up or down those tall stairs. What had she done when Margaret was a child to fill her with all these concerns?

Evelyn looked at the big bed for a minute after she had her nightclothes on, her hand against the lamp switch but not moving it. It seemed so big now when she looked at it. With William's length in it, the bed had always been barely large enough to hold him. One old woman, though, could hardly

make proper use of it. She hit the switch, and walked to the bed in darkness.

Evelyn was out back, dropping corn to the chickens when she heard the children arrive. On Saturdays, Rita sometimes dropped them off on her way to the store, and they would then spend the morning with her.

"Let me have some, Grandma," Cindy asked, reaching for a handful of the grain. At fourteen she was just beginning to blossom, and leaned gracefully on the fence to toss the kernels out.

Arthur, a year older, remained awkward, not yet accustomed to the height he was gaining, while at eleven Jeff was still childishly mischievous.

"Where's that old rooster, Grandma?" Jeff asked innocently.

"Probably still hiding from you, since your last visit."

"Aw, I didn't hurt him none," Jeff protested. "I was just trying to catch him so I could pet him a little."

"Well, I don't think he cares much for your petting, Jeff, and he's been known to try his spurs on boys who tried too hard." Evelyn hid a smile at Jeff's calculating expression, sure he wouldn't heed the warning. He shrugged and walked away, as though he had dismissed the bird from his mind.

"Grandma, are you going to sell the farm?" Arthur asked as Evelyn emptied the last of the seed and started for the house. His face was serious as he looked down from a height that already almost matched his father's. Ben, though, had never been as thin as Arthur, and had never looked so much like his arms and legs were ahead of the rest of his body.

"Why on earth would you think that, Arthur?"

"Oh, Aunt Margaret came by last night. I was on my way to bed, but I heard her say something about Dad 'talking some sense into her,' and 'that old place' being too big."

"Please don't sell, Grandma," Cindy spoke up, coming beside Evelyn. "We love it here, and when I come here I can think about Grandpa so easy. I still miss him a lot, you know?"

"Yes," Evelyn said, "I know."

"I wish I was older," Arthur said, looking ahead instead of at his grandmother, "so I could buy this place myself. Then we wouldn't ever have to see somebody tear it down or change it."

"Well, there's no need for you to be worrying for a long time. Margaret was after your grandpa for a lot of years before he died, saying we were too old to stay out here alone. I suppose I knew it wouldn't get any easier after he was gone. But I'm still the same crotchety old woman that said 'no' to her then, and I don't have any intentions of changing my mind." She took both youngsters by the hand, and looked from one to the other. "As long as I have the bunch of you behind me, there's a reason to

stay here. Now, quit worrying, and let's get some of those cookies I made in hopes you'd show up today."

"Margaret, I don't know why you need to bring Rita and me into this. You have been doing a lovely job of tormenting Ma all by yourself. What more can I do?" Ben was seated at the table, cup of coffee in front of him, irritation showing on his face.

Margaret took her coat off, and draped it over one of the kitchen chairs, while Rita poured coffee for her. "You know she would come a lot quicker listening to you than she would to me."

"Could that be because I rarely tell her what to do?"

"Now, Ben. You know this is for her own good. I thought you were beginning to see it my way when I stopped by the other night. A woman seventy years old has no business on thirty acres of land, trying to make do with only an occasional hired hand. One of these days something terrible is going to happen, and you'll be sorry you didn't help me."

"At the moment, the worst thing I can think of happening is that you would force an old woman to sell the only home she has ever known. Take it away from her now, and she'll have no reason to want to survive. If it makes her happy, why keep on her about it?

"Anyhow, what exactly is it that you think she can't handle there?"

"Ben, you know we've been over this a hundred times before. If you cared at all for your mother, you wouldn't keep making excuses."

"Margaret," Rita spoke up, "I know she is not my mother, and I really have no say in this. But it is not fair for you to say Ben doesn't care about her. You know he cares, and his mother knows he cares."

Margaret took a long drink of her coffee, glaring over the cup at her sister-in-law, not giving an answer.

"Thank you for the ride, Celia, I'll see you next week." Evelyn waved as her daughter's car disappeared down the lane to the main road. It was not really so far from town, but the long lane made Evelyn's property seem that much more secluded.

Evelyn smiled as she unlocked the door, and Quinn meowed, rubbing on her leg as she opened it. "So you stayed out and got hungry, hmm? Well, if you would catch those mice like you're supposed to, you wouldn't have to wait for me to get back."

Evelyn was satisfied with the day's accomplishments. She had taken care of some things that needed doing for a very long while, and now she could relax. She fixed herself a cup of tea, and sat down to enjoy it, continuing her conversation with Quinn. He was a good listener, and seemed to know when the appropriate 'meow' was called for.

"How would you like to go for a little trip, Quinn?" A pause while he responded, then she continued, "Well, I think we will go tonight. Margaret called me again this morning, and insists she will be over in the morning to speak with me. She mentioned that Ben and Rita are now in agreement that I should leave this place. What keeps Ben and Rita from telling me so themselves, I do not know, except that Margaret has a way of twisting what people say. At any rate, I believe we will go out a little later and see if we can't get William's old car to crank. What do you say to that?"

The answer, as she expected, was a very positive meow.

"I don't understand it," Ben was saying when Margaret walked in, "She had never driven a car in her life." He was seated in the living room of Evelyn's old house, wearing the suit he had worn home from church, a look of puzzled remorse on his face.

"They said she wasn't in any pain, that she didn't suffer at all," Rita soothed, sitting down on the sofa next to him.

"But if she had somewhere she needed to go, why wouldn't she have called one of us?" He shook his head. "She's never done anything so foolish before as to take that old car out alone, and surely never over that damned bridge."

Margaret's face was tight with anger, which she tried to control while she removed her coat and hung it aside. She walked stiffly over and took a seat across from Ben.

"You sound so surprised that some ill has befallen our mother, when I have been warning you for years now."

"Oh, well, had I known *this* was what you were talking about, I would have chained that old garage door shut years ago."

"Ben." Rita spoke, softly reproving him.

Margaret sat, scowling into the fireplace, and the door opened again. This time it was Celia, looking bewildered. "I couldn't believe what I just heard—that Mama drove herself over a bridge?" her voice lacked its normal spirit, and her eyes were damp as she took a chair.

"We can't believe it, either," Ben answered, "But it appears to be true."

"How strange—do you know that only yesterday I drove her into town to see Mr. Carlton, Papa's attorney?"

"Whatever for?" Margaret asked.

"She said something about having the will made over to Arthur, Cindy, and Jeff. That was odd, don't you think?"

Margaret's face turned in disbelief, and understanding crossed Ben's features. At last Evelyn could rest.

Marjory Gargosh

Fernandina, 1975

(A Beach Ballad)

Broad banner of beach unfurled along a curving shore;
Blue sea billowing, breaking, ebbing to break once more;
White gulls gliding, fluttering, calling above the ocean's roar;
Sand dunes, frosted with plumes, rising gently from the shore
In shapes of waves now stilled.

Waters glistening in the full moon's glow;
Sweep of sky with stars so low
They blend with bobbing lights
Of shrimp boats in their steady flight
Across the dark horizon.

Sagging pier, jagged jetties, old fort sleeping in the sun,
Victorian houses, ancient churchyards . . . drawn on one
Broad canvas . . . with neon lights and trampolines,
Swimming pools and golfing greens . . .
And clouds of insect spray.

Eave-shaded cottages, sturdily built,
Some standing tall on stilts;
Cottage windows in masses,
Like eyes in square-shaped glasses,
Watching for the sunrise.

Ebony faces, gentle and wise;
Sunbronzed children with Latin eyes;
Fishermen's fingers, nimbly mending nets in the blaze of noon;
Gleaming tables laden with shrimp in a room festooned
With gently blowing moss.

Visions of pirates and cavaliers,
Spanish grandees and pioneers
Who long ago dwelt on these shores,
To build and share the legacy
Of the sea . . .
The changeless, ever-changing sea . . .
The sounding, beautiful sea.

Dorothy L. Stipe

Black Child

Black child, Black child, why are you
wandering the streets?

Where's your mother?
Where's your father?
Did they leave you
alone?
Are you lost?
Where's your brother,
Where's your sister?

It's past your bed time, it's time to
go home.

Do you have a home?
Haven't you heard?
He's out to get you—
he's out to take your life,
your soul.

Are you all alone at home?

Where's your mother?
Where's your father?
Black child.

Iris Banks

The First Fall Task

It was going to be a cold bleak day. I guess the single pistol shot was what woke me. I could faintly remember its soft echo in my sleep. Jumping out of bed, I grabbed my jeans and threw on a sweat shirt, stopping half way down the stairs to tie my tennis shoes.

So they had already started. Not even taking the time to brush my hair, I threw my parka on and ran out the door. I shivered as the bone-chilling wind whipped my parka open. In seconds my fingers were numb, making it difficult to snap it shut. Hurrying down the long gravel drive, I vowed to myself I wouldn't get sick, I'd handle this like an old pro.

You have to understand. Being born and raised in the city, all of the family's food came from the sanitary tiled floor and chrome-countered store, packaged neatly on white styrofoam and wrapped in cellophane. This new world was so alien to me. Homemade lye soap and cornbread with bits of fatback for flavor were strange to me.

I ran not because I was anxious to get this started so much as to just get my blood pumping. I went the long way, up the road, then doubled back down the Dodds' driveway. I wouldn't dare cross the pasture, where all types of unknown creatures lived. I was panting as I rounded the barn and came to an abrupt stop at her feet. There was a hole in her head, but no blood. Funny, I thought it would be much more gory than that. The only bad thing was her thick protruding rough tongue which hung out of the side of her mouth, baring sharp white teeth.

My neighbor, Johnny Dodd, a small, compact, muscled young man, was standing over two large metal drums which were sitting on a large fire. The steam reluctantly drifted into the cold air. He pulled out an old worn blanket from one of the drums with two large wooden sticks and draped it over the sow. Silently, Johnny, myself, and several of his ole coon dogs, observed the covered mound at our feet. The dogs scattered as John flung back the still warm blanket. Handing me an ancient kitchen knife, bound with wire to hold its fractured wooden handle together, he grabbed another and bent to his task.

I watched as he scraped the coarse thick hair off the hide of the pig. I was shocked by the simple discovery that pigs even had hair. I thought all pigs had pink leathery skin as pictured in any child's nursery book of "The Three Little Pigs." It seemed we scraped for hours, belly, legs, and sides, as the rough coarse hair instinctively knew to fly into my eyes and mouth. Johnny simply spat each hair aside as nonchalantly as a popcorn hull

which eventually makes its presence known to your tongue. The endless scraping was interrupted for short moments as the soaked, steaming blanket was reapplied to the sow, loosening the tenacious grip of the stubborn hair.

As Johnny finished a few last hard to reach places, like around the feet and behind the ears, I sat down to rest, wiping away the hair which clung to my face, while puffing small white clouds with my warm breath. I realized part of the smell was reaking from myself. The dogs slipped forward, sniffing at me. As Johnny bent, grasping a deadly sharp butchering knife, he threw me a questioning moment's glance. Steadying my nerves, I reluctantly followed Johnny to the head of the sow. While scraping the hair away, I had managed to stay away from the huge gash at her throat, where she had been bled after she was shot. John now thrust his large hand into her neck for a firm hold and in seconds had her laying open from neck to groin, knowing just how far in to cut without slicing the intestines.

As I struggled with both hands to hold the right side of the rib cage back, Johnny held the left side open with one and scooped out the "innerds" with the other. A mass of lungs, heart, spleen, and other unknown steaming organs flew within inches of my shoulder to the ground. This had been the long awaited for moment as the crowd of hounds moved as one body to devour the feast. Again Johnny invaded the cavity with his cold red rough hand, enjoying the brief warmth of her lingering body heat.

Marie now stepped in with mountains of bent and battered pails. The liver was placed in one, the gullet in another. The head, now severed, lay on the ground a foot or two away, with a hazy look in our direction, as if the sow were silently observing us. The tongue, no longer seen, lay in one of the many pails somewhere. Marie made countless trips to the house to wash and wrap each pail's contents, a contented shy smile on her face, of a mother who knows her children will eat for a few months more.

The children watched from frosty window panes, not really able to see anything with those wide, innocent, questioning eyes. I stepped between the window's view as if to spare them the vivid scene before my own eyes. My attention was back at the chore before us. I wondered if I would remember exactly where to cut the hind quarter for hams and the back side for chops. Johnny managed to neatly select each portion of flesh and carved out a meal as aptly as any seasoned butcher. Marie was there to receive each one, vanishing for a few moments, only to return with empty pails. I helped to carry the last of the meat into the kitchen.

It felt stifling hot compared to the weather outside, and the smell of freshly butchered meat was much stronger within the confines of the house. I glanced about me at what used to be the family pet, now in mounds of packages of all sizes and shapes, ready for the freezer. Johnny now sitting on the edge of the kitchen table, a warm coffee mug in his still bloody hands, must have read my thoughts. He grinned, slapped me on the back, and said, "I guess I just like bacon too much."

Pen Wells

Self Analysis

My hair is too straight,
It won't hold a curl.
There isn't a tooth in my head
That looks like a pearl.

My thighs tend to bulge,
And my tummy's not flat.
When it comes to being "with it"
I don't know "where it's at."

My feet are too big,
My eyes are too small,
My nose is too short,
And I'm anything but tall.

My pants legs are still wide;
I'm not in style.
If I need to look dressed up
It takes me a while.

Despite my failings,
Of which I have many,
I hold up my chin;
I have CHARACTER, but plenty!

But I know I'm special,
By someone above I've been told.
When he made me, he sighed and shrugged,
and then threw away the mold!

Pen Wells

Kudzu

Ancient creeper,
verdant crawler;
blithely clambers,
slowly
smothers.
Reaching, striving, weaving

tendrils;
waving,
vining,
twining.
urgent
urgent
urgent
Conquests, but
slowly,
so slowly,
barely visible
so as not to alarm
its prey.

Admire
the power;
photosynthetic phantasm.
Admire the grace
of this
over-zealous
key. Draping
all—
telephone phantoms,
with verdant arms outstretched.

Ancient creeper,
lover of light;
slither onward and
scale the heights.
For none can take you,
save fire or ice;
and Mother Nature
the only
voice your
roots will
heed.

Katharine Russell

Belle

She is waiting.
A not-so-china doll,
a crinoline canopy on the sun-touched green.
Great-white-gentlemen drawling in manorial salute
stand soldier-straight on the porch.
A breeze summer-sweet carries spirituals to her ear
like flying embers glowing-fanned
by the lilt of her bonnet.
An evening rose too delicate to touch,
she waits for morning.

Hoyt Coffee

Just Trees

Trees.
Giantly, gently,
fanning the breeze.

Aisle upon aisle,
pew after pew,
giantly, gently,
fanning the breeze.

Brown spotted hands flick flies
and dog-days heat.
The service is aflutter with cardboard christs captioned;
"Marvin's Hardware."

Limb after limb,
branch upon branch,
giantly, gently,
fanning the breeze.

Trees.
Nothing more,
nothing less . . .

Hoyt Coffee

The Hired Hand

Ely, rise up and start your day!
Idle hands will make the devil play.
Yas-suh, Miss Sally.

Feed the chickens and milk the cow,
And stay away from that old sow.
Yas-suh, Miss Sally.

Let down the gap in Number Four.
The grass there just ain't no more.
Yas-suh, Miss Sally.

You gotta hurry and rake the hay.
This just can't be your lazy day!
Yas-suh, Miss Sally.

You're rocking in the vestibule!
I'll say, you're stubborn as a mule.
Yas-suh, Miss Sally.

Don't slam that door with such a bam.
One more thing—can't you say "Yes, ma'am"?
Yas-suh, Miss Sally.

Elizabeth Grayson

From Circuitry to Flesh: Impressions of Ann Deagon

Poet . . . . This word, at one time, brought to my mind a picture of an isolated, secluded being, who was withdrawn from the mainstream of life. A poet was like a machine; it sat somewhere in a corner and produced manuscripts of verse with deep, profound, and prophetic meanings. Ann Deagon, though, changed my somewhat naive, stereotyped image of a poet. When she read to a mesmerized audience of DeKalb College students on a recent Tuesday morning, a guest of the college's Creative Writing Lectureship Series, her commanding physical presence, mental acuity, and striking poetic images transformed this picture of the machine poet into a real flesh and blood poet.

Ann Deagon's physical characteristics were the first blow to my image of the machine poet. As I waited for this unimaginable apparition of profundity to appear at the door, a tall, regular looking, plainly clothed woman walked in, perched herself on the edge of a desk and announced herself as Ann Deagon. Naturally, I was thunderstruck. Long, black hair and old fashioned glasses belong to human beings, not poets. One would hardly think that this creature could produce pretty poetry with the emotion and feeling expressed in the verse I had read the night before. My next surprise came when she began to recite her poems. Her voice flowed with emotion and feeling. It set the mood of the poems and actually made interpretation easier. It was a very commanding voice; everyone in the room was silent listening to Ms. Deagon's vocal music.

Beyond her shocking physical appearance, Ann Deagon impressed me with her mental abilities. She was very dominating and commanding and yet she maintained an informal, almost personal relationship with the audience. After Ms. Deagon walked in the room and claimed her spot on the edge of the desk, she placed the podium where she wanted it, spread out her materials, and introduced herself. Although she waited for no one and began speaking when she wanted to, she seemed responsive to the needs of the audience. Her statements were personal and revealed many intimate thoughts, yet in discussing the poems she did not press the audience for specific sexual or emotional allusions as though respecting their sensibilities.

Her exceptional intelligence was revealed through the incorporation of a pilthorn of classical references into her working vocabulary and her poems. She showed a deep understanding of mythology and literature in poems such as "Arcadia" and "Enclosures" in which Pan and Tosca appear as central figures.

Also, she recognized the variation of educational background in the audience and was neither too technical nor too abstract in her phraseology; she explained anything that might be beyond someone in the audience.

Finally, Ann Deagon's poetry itself demolished what was left of my machine poet image. She presented a vast flood of human emotion in her verse. In "The Flicker" a child cries for the death of a magnificant bird which her uncle has shot for her. She hides her tears because she is embarrassed and because her uncle cannot possibly understand the child's response to death. Grief, however, is only one emotion explored by the poet; her poems span the range of human feeling.

Ann Deagon completely changed my attitude about the poet. Her physical appearance and mental impressiveness, along with her intense, emotional poems, transformed the circuit board machine poet into a living, feeling human being, who expressed her thoughts and emotions through written verse. Ms. Deagon made a lasting impression on me that revolutionized my thoughts about poetry and poets.

Danny Thibodeau

Life In Venice

This is Venice, nor am I out of it.

Under the viaduct the alleyway's
a car's-width wide. Edge through and snake
alongside loading docks. The packing-house
men are tall and black. They shoulder
sides of beef, whole gutted lambs.
Their fingernails are painted red.
My butcher father, have you forgot?

Virginia homes have grace, their cemeteries
well-sculptured, trimmed, gardens of ease.
Ironwork defines them. A field away,
stubble gone to woodlot, field stones
mark where slaves have gone to loam.
Inside, a gowned hostess regales us:
the mistress would not sell her boy
till master promised to procure
this rosewood spinnet. So much for Art.
My gracious mother, did you ever know?

All go to ground by water in Venice.
To San Michel' the barges go.
The glum regatta whispers past.
I know the gondolier, his name.
And some are dead and some are yet to die
who stand and watch the gondolier go by.

Because the tree grows through my body
because that lading weighs my mind
I practice still my father's art.
After the labyrinth, Theseus gone,
I wind the string up for the next time,
lay out the Minotaur—unwieldy beast—
upon this block that is my bed,
search out with knives the sweet disjunctions:
here the chine, here the prime ribs.

Ann Deagon

A Healing

After the first cut
I almost bled to death,
but like medieval leeches,
bled myself again and again
with rusty knives and filthy pins.

I lanced the festered wound
and drained the yellow pus
with rusty knives and filthy pins.

I cauterized the greater wound
with a dull blade
warmed in half-burned ashes of dung.

And I had just wrapped the tender wound
in a rotten bandage
to protect it and to save it,
when it closed.

Sandra Durham

Trojan Women in Spring

When spring came, wherever they were
did any one rejoice.
Had bud or blade the power
to abate their sorrow.

Sitting at the loom
did Hecabe smile at a birdsong.
Did Andromache uncover her head
and loose her hair in the breeze.
Apollo cursed Cassandra, dead
at the hand of Clytemnestra,
never knew.

Perhaps it was safer to die.

Sandra Durham

Appearances

Appearances
are
what
we
keep up
for
others
To
keep
them
from
seeing
our
imperfections
Which
might
allow
them
to
love us
For
being
as
human
as
they are.

Linda Snow

Driving Alone

Driving alone
My mind on the road
After the long grinding day;
Though tired and empty
The music's within me
As the radio's starting to play.

I turn it up loud,
I sing to the crowd.
Everyone knows I'm the star.
Whether country or pop,
I am always the tops
When I'm driving along in my car.

When I pull to the light
And I look to the right,
A fellow is pointing at me.
He's been watching me scream
To the fans in my dream,
And he's laughing hysterically.

Lucy Gillespie

The Mirror

with apologies to Ann Deagon

Eleven seven seven four it says,
an even numbered, gap-toothed smile on glass
so brittle-sharp inviting a caress
from fingertips of blood and virgin flesh.

A bovine stink, this doorway has bad breath,
exhaling rotten wood, antique decay,
and constant clouds of shaven splintered death
to walnut stained commodes in disarray.

The mirror hangs alone in retrospect
reflecting faces lined with daily deeds,
all framed with grey molds grown by their neglect,
all dark with their reflections wrinkled seed.

This silver-backed historian records
this modern world including T.V. words.

Hoyt Coffee

Lifeline

I sit darkly, contemplating
catheter, cobalt
positive pressure breathing
proctoscope privacy.

Check my vital signs.

My mind's eye sees me briskwalking
through dead browns
I gaze up at reds and yellows
and breathe blue air.

Breathe deep. Check October's vital signs.

Measuring, monitoring medical machines,
Breathe hope.

E.B. Surtees

The Gentle Rape

Softly came the morning and the truth,
Gently the reminder and the proof.
He did not curse nor did he force,
Put her at ease with kindly voice
And clear it was she had no choice
But to comply meant moral death.

And yet as he came closer . . . more rapid
Beat her heart, faster than his breath.
He drew her closer now, not with a swear,
But with a vow to love her until his
dying day.
And with his mouth upon hers. . .there was
nothing she could say,

She acquiesced . . . . she feit his gentle
hand caress her breast,
Move down her thigh. . . .
And though we love the sound of lovers
sighs,
There is nothing speaks so cruelly as
a gentle rapist lies.

Nancy Goldberg

Lost

Lost in a crowd
Of angry faces,
Neon lit streets,
With no empty spaces.

Cars and buses
Move down the avenue.
Wandering alone,
Thinking about you.

What is the truth,
In this city of lies?
Polluted waters,
Polluted skies.

Lost in the middle
Of a mass of humanity.
Where so many people
Have lost their sanity.

Where will it end?
What will be?
I need you,
Why can't you see?

Tom Pynn

Sonnet

Is this the sonnet I was asked to write;
The one that my dear teacher me assigned?
Am I the wretched soul who's tossed at night
Whilst words went spinning 'round inside my mind?

Where are you when I need you, Dr. Freud?
I'm tortured by the same recurring dream
Each time, when strict iambics are employed
I cannot make the rhyming fit the scheme.

What Herculean efforts I've displayed
Attempting to create a poem that's nice.
Should one (who can) show mercy with my grade,
Then it will all be worth the sacrifice.

At any rate, I've learned a lesson here—
It's tough as Hell to be a sonneteer!

Shirley Stone

Feelings of a Dishrag

Sometimes I feel like a dishrag,
used, squeezed and misused.

Used in a way that is stench,
filth and displeasing;

Squeezed in a way where there is
nothing left but misery, and

Misused in a way where my hands
are tied and nothing can be
done to prevent my feelings
as a dishrag.

Anella Higgins

Bette Midler Is Here

The line is long
Some have roses
All have her book
Gawd, this line is long

Her music is playing everywhere
We slowly inch our way along
If only I could see her
This line is incredibly long

I think I can see her
Under the silver turban.
What will I say?
I wish this line would move!

Oh, God, I can see her
I'll tell her she's great
I'll tell her I love her book
This line is moving

The line is moving
Why is my mouth so dry?
Why are my knees shaking?
I'm next!

Oh! Hello!
The line is moving

Nora Leslie

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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